

## TALKS TO FARMERS

Useful Information Imparted by Institute Workers and Participants

Value of Eucalyptus as a Timber Tree, and Advice as to Varieties Adapted to Imperial Valley Conditions. How to Eliminate Alkali.

Much information of practical value to farmers was imparted by the University representatives and brought out by informal discussion at the sessions of the Farmers' Institute held in El Centro Opera House last week. The speakers did not attempt to "lay down the law" to the farmers of Imperial Valley, but freely admitted that there were many problems involved in the unfamiliar conditions of soil and climate which could be worked out only by experience. They made suggestions and invited discussion, and they were as ready to receive information as give it. Pertinent questions asked by participants in the institute brought out many interesting points and developed differences of opinion based upon the results of intelligent experiments, and pencils were busy making notes of the discussions.

Dr. C. M. Haring, veterinarian, talked of sanitary dairying and of the common diseases of domestic animals, and told how to treat—and how not to treat—the disorders to which horses are subject. He was asked if glanders could be cured, and replied that possibly some cases were curable, but the disease ought not to be cured; the afflicted animals should be destroyed.

By aid of diagrams, Dr. Haring explained the dentation of horses and the method of determining their age by examination of their teeth.

Especial interest was manifested in the talk of J. W. Mills on the planting of eucalyptus trees. Mr. Mills said the eucalyptus was the coming timber tree, and if planted extensively would do much to avert the menace of a timber famine in this country. Of the 100 varieties growing in California, four

or five seemed suitable for Imperial Valley. The sugar gum and lemon-scented gum were not suitable because the young trees would not endure cold, and the blue gum would not be satisfactory because of its shallow rooting and its inability to stand dry heat.

Mr. Mills recommended varieties of red gum, Rostrata, as hardy, deep-rooted, hard-wood trees, especially adapted to this region. He advised planting 1,200 trees to the acre, six feet apart, and gave detailed instructions for raising trees from seed and for setting them out. At the age of five years the trees are large enough to produce three posts to the tree, and the value of an acre of trees is estimated at \$825. At the age of ten years, the trees are worth \$5 each as poles, or \$6,000 an acre, and the wood remaining is worth another \$500. Mr. Mills strongly advised the planting of eucalyptus trees in the Valley for wind-breaks, as a shade for stock and as a crop to be harvested at profit.

Other subjects treated by Institute speakers were; good roads, by D. A. Aplin, of Imperial; teaching agriculture in public schools, by L. E. Cooley, of El Centro; vegetable culture and deciduous fruits, J. W. Mills; grape and citrus fruit growing, B. F. Thorpe.

Director Neff brought up the subject of green manure crops and recommended particularly the vetches. A farmer objected that green manure crops produced black alkali, and Mr. Neff explained that the humus did not produce alkali, but made apparent its presence in the soil by turning the carbonate of soda black. There were two ways of getting rid of alkali by the use of water: bringing it to the surface and washing it away, or driving it down and keeping it down by cultivation of the surface. The latter method would not be applicable to alfalfa fields, but alfalfa would tolerate considerable alkali. Proper under drainage, where possible, would rid land of alkali. Sugar beets had no appreciable effect in taking of alkali out of land, popular belief to the contrary notwithstanding.

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